

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**LAND SMOOTHING**

(Acre

**CODE 466**

**DEFINITION**

Removing irregularities on the land surface by use of special equipment.

**PURPOSE**

Improve surface drainage, provide for more effective use of precipitation, obtain more uniform planting depths, provide for more uniform cultivation, improve equipment operation and efficiency, improve terrace alignment, and facilitate contour cultivation.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

This practice applies on areas where depressions, mounds, old terraces, turn rows, and other surface irregularities interfere with the application of needed soil and water conservation and management practices.

It is limited to areas having adequate soil depth or where topsoil can be salvaged and replaced.

**CRITERIA**

The extent of rough grading required and tolerances of the finished smoothing job shall be in keeping with the requirements of the planned cropping system.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

**Water Quantity**

1. Effects on the water budget, especially on volumes and rates of runoff, infiltration, and evaporation.

2. Potential for changes in plant growth and transpiration because of changes in the volume of soil water.

**Water Quality**

1. Effects on erosion and the movement of sediment and soluble and sediment-attached substances carried by runoff.
2. Effects on the use and management of nutrients and pesticides.
3. Effects on downstream water quality.
4. Potential for earth moving to uncover or redistribute toxic materials, such as saline soils.
5. Effects on the visual quality of downstream water resources.

**PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Plans and specifications for land smoothing shall be in keeping with this standard and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended purpose.

**OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

An operation and maintenance plan must be prepared for use by the owner or others responsible for operating the system. The plan should provide specific instructions for operating and maintaining the system to insure that it functions properly. The plan should also provide for periodic inspections and prompt repair of eroded or damaged areas.